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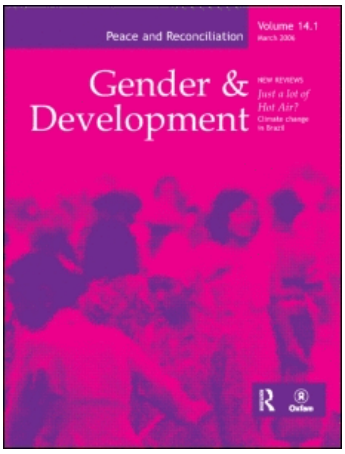

Gender & Development
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713422432

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Online Publication Date: 01 November 2008

To cite this Article Goldenberg, Dahlia(2008)'Grassroots women's leadership and 'deepening democracy': the Huairou Commission's Local to Local Dialogue replication',Gender & Development,16:3,443 — 456
To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/13552070802465292
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13552070802465292

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Grassroots women's leadership and 'deepening democracy': the Huairou Commission's Local to Local Dialogue replication

Dahlia Goldenberg

Grassroots women's leadership is important if democracy is to be 'deepened' – that is, if representative democracies are to formally include citizen participation in more ways than simply voting in elections. One approach to deepening democracy is to encourage and support spaces – both literal and metaphorical – that enable grassroots women to organise as leaders and engage with local government to achieve change in their communities. This, it is hoped, will enable women to develop ongoing relationships with local government and achieve concrete improvements for their communities. The Huairou Commission and GROOTS International have developed an approach which helps grassroots women's organisations to do this. This article examines how grassroots women's organisations in Uganda, Kenya, and Russia have successfully adapted the Local to Local Dialogue method to their local contexts, empowering and recognising poor women as community leaders.

Introduction

In the 1990s, there was increasing unease that voting and representational politics did not in fact result in the ideals of participation that democracy was supposed to uphold. Democracy had, at least nominally, been adopted more widely than ever before in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, eastern and central Europe, and post-communist Russia, yet concerns about the 'depth' of democracy, and the declining level of participation and satisfaction on the part of citizens, grew (Gaventa 2007; Bystydzienski and Sekhon 2002). It is being argued that even though democracy is failing, it can be revived if measures are taken to 'deepen democracy' (Fung and Wright 2003, 5). The view that achieving real democracy requires stronger citizen involvement in government has gained much support in recent years (Dryzek 2000; Fung and Wright 2003). At the same time, rhetoric and practice among international development institutions – both academic and policy-focused institutions – push for various means

ISSN 1355-2074 print/1364-9221 online/08/030443–14 © Oxfam GB 2008
DOI: 10.1080/13552070802465292

of citizen participation. The logic is that, if citizens have closer and more frequent contact with elected officials, presumably they will gain more influence over the policy making and implementation that affects their daily lives.

Much of the academic work on participatory local governance focuses on spaces that are either set up or encouraged by the government – participatory budgeting, local councils, vigilance councils, and government auditing tools (Cornwall and Schuttan Coelho 2007; Fung and Wright 2003). A useful distinction has been made between 'invited' and 'claimed/created' spaces, terms used in a framework made by John Gaventa, which was based on concepts developed earlier by Andrea Cornwall. In invited spaces, government actors invite citizens to participate in spaces for political input or dialogue, and in claimed/created spaces, citizens develop their own opportunities for political input or dialogue (Gaventa 2006; Cornwall 2002). This article focuses on how grassroots women create and claim political space at the local level.

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An increasing number of countries are trying to solve the problems by decentralising government. In decentralisation, central government devolves control over resources to local levels of government, thus increasing the importance of effective citizenship participation at the local level. In some contexts, decentralisation takes place alongside participatory processes initiated by the government. In others, the government provides no mechanisms or encouragement to develop such 'linkages' (Leonard and Marshall 1982, 6).

In addition to citizen–government linkages, deepening democracy clearly requires women's participation. One could say that democracy 'has never existed' at all, because of the persistent and pervasive exclusion of women and their interests from all realms of government (Pateman 1970, 210). While women in general are marginalised from government participation, poor women with fewer resources face a stronger disadvantage than others. Poor women are unlikely to participate effectively if they have not first come together as a group to develop relationships, discuss and debate their experiences, concerns, and opinions, and develop a shared analysis and agenda for action. 'Evidence suggests that it is precisely where politicised feminist organisations have built skills for engagement that women have been able to exercise voice most effectively' (Cornwall and Goetz 2005, 792). Community-based women's groups are 'building the foundations for participatory democracy by establishing alternative structures and contributing to decision making at the local level' (Bystydzienski and Sekhon 2002, 13). At the same time, grassroots or poor women carry out a substantial amount of community development work on their own, and the case studies in this article demonstrate the initiative necessary for their contributions to be recognised and supported by local government, which should listen to the agendas they develop.

This article seeks to fill a gap in the literature on newly claimed or created spaces for political participation developed and led by grassroots women. Most of the

research on the various concepts of participatory democracy or deepening democracy pays scant attention to the initiatives in which women's groups initiate and lead processes. Currently, grassroots women's local organising and networking, local community organising, prioritisation of issues, and advocacy with authorities, often occurs outside the realm of the participatory spaces opened up by local authorities.

The article focuses on a case study of a method for promoting women's political participation, created by grassroots women's organisations and their partner NGOs – the Local to Local Dialogue. The Huairou Commission and GROOTS International have supported pilot initiatives of the Local to Local Dialogue in various locations throughout the world, and documented the methodology. These two international organisations support grassroots women's local and global organising, aiming to improve their communities and have a say in the decisions that affect women's lives.

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GROOTS International is a global network of grassroots women's organisations that women leaders set up as a movement where they could exchange skills and knowledge among peers to improve their local development practices. It also serves to take their collective voice to global policy areas. GROOTS International, Habitat International Coalition – Women and Shelter Network, other global women's networks,[1] and UN Habitat came together in the nearby town of Huairou during the 1995 World Women's Conference in Beijing. They created the Huairou Commission as a broader coalition that would link grassroots women's networks to each other and to institutional partners, particularly to provide an organised women's voice within dialogues on human settlements. GROOTS International and its members are also considered members of the Huairou Commission.

Under its Governance Campaign, the Huairou Commission documents and promotes the spread of good governance practices where grassroots women participate in local decision-making that affect their lives and their communities. The Huairou Commission links grassroots women's organisations across borders, based upon their common experiences and priorities.

For this article, I draw on my work as a co-ordinator/organiser for both the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International, in their shared global office in New York City. My first-hand experience with the Local to Local Dialogues and other work described in this article comes largely from my role in co-ordinating conferences, panel discussions, and peer-learning activities, at which the organisations featured in this article presented their experiences in implementing the Local to Local Dialogues and other local governance work. I have also supported them in documenting their work and working on the global advocacy agendas that they jointly set.

Women developing political leadership through Local to Local Dialogues

The Local to Local Dialogue method was first developed by the Asian Women and Shelter Network with support from UNDP (The Urban Governance Initiative). The method drew heavily on work led by SPARC, Mahila Milan, and the National Slum Dwellers' Federation of India (Huairou Commission and UN Habitat 2004).

In 2002, seeing the value of the Local to Local Dialogue experience in Asia, the Huairou Commission facilitated a pilot project for six of its member organisations in Argentina, Czech Republic, Kenya, Tanzania, Russia, and Uganda (FOWODE), in which they adapted the idea of Local to Local Dialogues for use in their own contexts (*ibid.*). Since then, other organisations in Uganda (UCOBAC), Rwanda, and Nigeria have begun to use the Local to Local model as a basis for participation in local and national governance, but the replication of the Local to Local has yet to be brought to scale. Three of the original organisations have successfully continued and replicated the model across their countries, as will be discussed in the case studies. A Local to Local Dialogue training in April 2007, a new project in collaboration with UN Habitat to scale up the training and replication process, and a forthcoming manual for grassroots leaders are all under way, and are intended to scale up the replication.

In the next sections, I look at the three case studies, and consider what the Local to Local experiences have in common. One feature is the process of self-organising among poor women that provides the base for their political activity. A second is that the groups create and claim a political space of their own initiative, in communities where local government has not developed adequate invited spaces for deeper political participation. Next, in their political activity, the groups seek to break down problematic habits of relating between government officials and citizens, confronting the power-laden modes of interaction that are commonplace. Neither group focuses its political action on a particular issue, or takes an adversarial 'protestor' role, as many social movements or NGOs do. Rather, both engage with local authorities to satisfy a variety of needs, and in order to have an ongoing relationship with their government. The grassroots groups using the Local to Local Dialogue seek mutual understanding and ongoing partnership with their local governments, whereby local authorities begin to see them as agents with resources and potential contributions to make, with whom it is in the authorities' best interests to collaborate (*ibid.*).

The case studies

The local organisations described in this article are all members of the Huairou Commission, either directly, or through their membership in GROOTS.

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Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC)

UCOBAC is a Ugandan NGO that provides services, capacity-building, and other support to children and to women caring for community members who suffer from HIV-related illnesses, tuberculosis, or malaria (UCOBAC 2007). It also supports women to act effectively as elected officials in local government, and as active local constituents (*ibid.*).

In Uganda, women hold a high number of positions in local and national government, because of the affirmative-action policy of the national government (Goetz and Hassim 2003). However, women elected at local levels still face seemingly insurmountable challenges: the patriarchal culture of discrimination in government institutions; and the lack of support and capacity-building to give the women more confidence and skills to combat that discrimination (UCOBAC 2007). During informal research conducted by UCOBAC to report on its practical work, a local councillor of the Koboga District, Ms Asfa, told UCOBAC: 'there was a lot of inferiority complex for women councillors, so most of them kept quiet during deliberations, there were threats from men to women and in case one was outspoken, they would be ignored by the male speaker or not given chance to speak or threatened, women's issues were not treated as priority and women councillors lacked skills' (*ibid.*, 5).

Other studies confirm this finding. For example, one study shows that women councillors experience 'fear and shyness', due to limits of language, experience, and 'cultural factors which discourage women's participation' (Johnson *et al.* 2003, 10). These local councils, on which women sit, are one of the major mechanisms for decentralised decision-making in the decentralisation policy of Uganda. The local councils exist at five different levels of local government, and a government mandate for affirmative action applies a policy of one-third women members to them (*ibid.*).

Decentralisation strategies hold much potential to improve services for poor people, but their success is highly dependent on the political context and motives behind it (Leonard 2006). One criticism of Uganda's decentralisation strategy is that President Museveni used decentralisation as an excuse to multiply the number of districts throughout the country and therefore gain more clients in the patronage system that assures his re-election (Green 2008). Additional districts produce additional local posts for individuals who would support Museveni in return for their new jobs and salaries (*ibid.*). Turner also indicates that decentralisation has created conditions conducive to 'clientelism and corruption', as well as 'mass vote buying', limiting any conditions for citizens to hold local authorities accountable (Turner 2005, 13). While some civil-society actors try to use decentralisation as an opportunity to advance grassroots participation, some are keenly aware of the bias against the grassroots citizens in supposed consultations (*ibid.*). One civil-society actor commented in a study that consultations do not include grassroots citizens; rather, they consist of meetings between government officials and bureaucrats of different levels of administration (*ibid.*). In their study, Paul Francis and Robert James assert that

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the '[local] council system operates in ''patronage mode''', delivering services based on patron–client relations between the village-level councils and the district officials (*ibid.*, 12).

In this context of limited participation of women in local councils, and in contrast to difficulties of participating in invited government spaces, grassroots women initiated the Local to Local Dialogue to gain recognition for their contributions to local development, create space for deliberation, develop an ongoing relationship with the local authorities, and advocate for enhanced resource distribution. UCOBAC supported women in the district of Bugiri, sub-county Pulesa, to carry out Local to Local Dialogues as a way to enhance their existing efforts to attract the attention and support of local government. Previously, the grassroots women had had contact with a few local authorities, through an UCOBAC structure called Programme Management Teams (PMTs). Representatives from the local councils already participated in the PMTs, but the Local to Local Dialogues brought in more local authorities for a larger public discussion with the women (Mukisa 2008). UCOBAC staff began to work more intensively with the authorities after one of their staff attended the 2007 Local to Local training by GROOTS Kenya (Birungi Odong 2008).

GROOTS Kenya had been carrying out Local to Local Dialogues in Kenya since 2002, beginning with one of their member groups in the informal settlement of Mathare, in Nairobi (Huairou Commission and UN Habitat 2004). The grassroots member groups now use the Dialogues as 'an integral part of their work' (Mwaura-Muiru 2008a).[2] This training, in April 2007, was the first of its kind. It took place in Mathare, and was a one-day training led by grassroots leaders of GROOTS Kenya, for grassroots leaders of other organisations, NGO practitioners, and UN Habitat staff.[3]

The UCOBAC staff members who were trained returned to Uganda to share their ideas with the women who participated in UCOBAC's activities. In the process, UCOBAC first supported the women to form grassroots groups to carry out the Local to Local Dialogues together, which they would do independently of UCOBAC (UCOBAC 2007). One staff member, Frances Birungi Odong, explained, 'After we trained the grassroots women, we didn't stay with them or go to their meetings. These women went back to the community and only called us if they were stuck or needed advice' (Birungi Odong 2008, 2). Some of the women involved in the Dialogues had previously participated in the 'invited spaces' of local government, but those were spaces that the authorities controlled and used to report to the citizens.

The process of participation in the Local to Local Dialogue ran as follows. In the preparation phase, women first came together on several occasions to identify, discuss, and collectively prioritise their needs. The group selected some members to act as leaders, to represent the joint agenda of the group. Next, the leaders went to the local council's offices to explain the purpose of the Local to Local Dialogue, and to extend formal invitations to attend the meetings which were to take place as a part of the process. In the Uganda case, after a long, frustrating process of initiating contact with

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the authorities and having their meetings repeatedly postponed, the authorities attended the meetings in the women's own space – the community meeting room.

At the first meeting between women and the authorities, the Local to Local process involves the women explaining to the authorities the purpose of the encounter – in particular, that the meeting was not to discuss their personal political affiliations or their support for one politician or another, but to have an open discussion about the needs of the community (Birungi Odong 2008). A meeting that focuses on the political affiliations of citizens or asking for handouts might be expected in a local system dependent on patron–client relations, where politicians trade resources for votes. Patronage can be understood as a system where individuals seek individual benefits from patrons with greater power, in return for offering their political support. Patronage almost always yields smaller benefits for the individual client than it would for a collective community voice (Leonard 2006). Rather than joining in the patronage system, the women simply wanted to discuss community improvements on their own terms.

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In Uganda, the Local to Local Dialogue proved successful, and local government now sends a representative to the meetings of the women's group on a regular basis, clearly having overcome its initial resistance to attend. This representative shares information about the local budget, and channels the women's concerns back to local government. Perhaps this change occurred because the local authorities saw that they could carry out their work more effectively if the work these women already did and the knowledge they had were taken account. Solome Mukisa offers the insight that the Dialogues and follow-up, where the grassroots women can question the local authorities, make these authorities feel obliged to be accountable to the women. The Uganda Local to Local Dialogue showed concrete results, as well as a transformation in the way that women leaders are viewed. Since the Local to Local Dialogue, the local authorities have improved their ability to address the needs of poor women in their communities (UCOBAC 2007), and they 'appreciate the ability of women to contribute effectively to development' according to Frances Birungi Odong (Birungi Odong 2008, 2). She also reported that women influenced the government about women's property rights, domestic violence, education for the poorest children, and support for people infected by HIV. Local government funding increased for children's school materials and school uniforms, and made a contribution to the revolving loan fund of an HIV-positive women's group (*ibid.*). Such collaboration appears to have created a synergy between the work that home-based caregivers already carry out in their communities and the work for which the local health institutions hold responsibility. Solome Mukisa notes that, 'the district health department became more aware of the importance of ... working hand in hand with [the local caregivers] in addressing issues of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria ... so after the Local to Local, the district health department appreciated our work, so we can make referrals to the hospitals and health units' (Mukisa 2008). Such 'state–society synergy' is considered a valuable way of improving

governance (Evans 1996). From the side of the government, democracy was deepened, and from the side of the women, they gained power as leaders who could create change and improve resource allocation.

As the UCOBAC example shows, the Local to Local Dialogue process does deepen democracy, in the sense that it enhances women's skills to participate in forums in which they are able to represent the needs of their communities, and in this way to exercise leadership. In the meetings which formed a part of the Local to Local process, women controlled the space in the sense that they called the meetings, set the agendas, and facilitated the actual dialogue. They proved their leadership to themselves and to the elected officials (Birungi Odong 2008). The new relationship between the grassroots leaders and the local authorities brought concrete results to local democracy and to community development.

The group faced challenges in the process as well. For example, the less-educated women sometimes asked the more-educated women to speak on behalf of the group in the dialogue with local authorities. Such hierarchies are quite natural in group dynamics, and more research would be required to assess how the power dynamics play out. Do such dynamics actually suppress the more marginalised voices within the group, with the less-educated women perceiving themselves as less able to lead than the other women? Or, has the group deliberately chosen a strategy where the more-educated women speak on behalf of all, while supporting the other women to develop their capacities and confidence so that they can soon take over their role? The answer may even be 'yes' for both. However, regardless of the cause behind this dynamic, more leadership development is clearly needed so that all women can exercise leadership equally, regardless of their formal education.

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GROOTS Kenya (Grassroots Organisations Operating Together in Sisterhood)

UCOBAC's experience with the Local to Local Dialogue reflects many of the valuable lessons learned by GROOTS Kenya over its six-year period of carrying out the Dialogues. As a national network of women's self-help groups, GROOTS Kenya's members work on a variety of development issues relevant to their communities, from rehabilitating toilets in slums (Mwaura-Muiru 2001), to fighting for land-inheritance rights for women and carrying out home-based care for community members living with HIV and AIDS (GROOTS International 2008). Since 2002, GROOTS Kenya has used the Local to Local Dialogues as a method to gain government recognition and support to enhance the home-based caregiving and other areas of their work (Mwaura-Muiru 2008a). They began in 2002, by holding Local to Local Dialogues where as many as 88 community members received city council members in their informal settlements for the first time (Huairou Commission and UN Habitat 2004).

Now, in 2008, the Local to Local Dialogues have served to gain more recognition of grassroots women home-based caregivers as leaders who can participate in governmental processes and increase the resources their communities can access

(Mwaura-Muiru 2008a). Many of the local governments in the communities where GROOTS Kenya's groups are active have given women leaders direct power over resources, after coming to recognise them as important leaders through the Local to Local Dialogues. For example, Violet Shivutse, a leader from the Kamenga community, has been appointed by the high-level District Commissioner to the position of treasurer of the District Development Fund. This devolved fund decides the priorities for the budget as part of the national government's Vision 2030 programme to implement the Millennium Development Goals. Other community leaders in GROOTS Kenya have acquired positions in the Constituency Development Fund and the Local Authority Transfer Fund, which provide development funds at the local level (Mwaura-Muiru 2008b). The women's leadership helps to distribute resources fairly, either to combat HIV and AIDS or to form school bursaries for orphans, for example (Mwaura-Muiru 2008a). This success demonstrates increased empowerment of the women, and synergy between grassroots women's knowledge of community needs and local authorities' commitment and resources.

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In Kenya, as in Uganda, the space claimed by the women through the process of Local to Local Dialogues contrasts with other opportunities for political participation provided by the government, which are often wrapped up in patronage systems (Klopp 2001). In Uganda, invited spaces might act as ongoing tools for patronage systems, whereas in Kenya the situation might also be related to patronage systems, but it does not seem to function in an ongoing way over time. According to Esther Mwaura-Muiru, 'the communities are consulted only during the political campaigns, and the politicians do that only to be able to articulate the needs of the community in order to get elected' (*ibid.*). Local to Local Dialogues clearly deepen democracy by creating a space for the consultation and participation of local women leaders outside periods in which political campaigns are occurring.

UCOBAC and GROOTS Kenya also share the common challenge of ensuring that all members of the grassroots groups are equally able to take on leadership roles. Esther Mwaura-Muiru observed that in the Kenya case, once a grassroots woman develops as a strong leader, the other women grow accustomed to her leadership and expect her to continue leading, 'so how can you ensure that the most marginalised women take leadership, really? We need to do more leadership development with them' (*ibid.*). This is a serious challenge to be addressed in Local to Local Dialogues in future; one requiring long processes.

Information Centre of the Independent Women's Forum (ICIWF)

In Russia, the Information Centre of the Independent Women's Forum (ICIWF), a member of the Huairou Commission, has used the Local to Local Dialogue method to achieve greater local participation and collaboration between local government and citizens, despite the common resistance among citizens to collective action in Russian cities. Nationally, Russian democracy is weak, and this is also true at the local level

(ICIWF 2007). Self-led community organising and co-operation remain quite foreign to Russian political culture, but ICIWF has found that grassroots women's leadership on concrete issues that affect their daily lives can go a long way in reversing this.

ICIWF, a national women's NGO, collaborates with neighbourhoods in Petrozavodsk and other cities across Russia,[4] supporting citizens to form groups, develop a shared agenda, and achieve improvements in the infrastructure and quality of public life. Beginning in 2000, ICIWF supported neighbours from large housing complexes to form 13 neighbourhood groups in the city of Petrozavodsk. After supporting neighbours to form groups over approximately two years (Bozhkova 2008b), ICIWF organised consciousness-raising seminars to which it invited citizens, police officers, local authorities, and people from the private sector. In the seminars, the different stakeholders discussed community problems and priorities, challenges to solving them, and possible solutions. Over the next seven years, the neighbourhood groups continued to hold regular seminars, with the support and co-ordination of ICIWF. Several of these groups now hold their own seminars without ICIWF support (Bozhkova 2008a). In 2002, ICIWF carried out a similar process in Saratov of supporting neighbourhood groups to hold Dialogues with local authorities (Huairou Commission and UN Habitat 2004). However, in Saratov, local legislation supported the formation of self-governance committees, such that ICIWF worked with already existing committees of citizens to hold multi-stakeholder seminars (Bozhkova 2008b).

The seminars have resulted in improved relationships among the different stakeholders; community contribution to planning; and increased participatory political space. Officials, other experts, and community members themselves began to see the community members as experts, and to value their relationships. In these seminars, the participants broke down the assumed hierarchy between the different groups by sitting in small groups to have frank discussions (*ibid.*). For example, lay citizens overcame the assumed expertise of architects and designed their own playgrounds. Knowing the dynamics of how crime occurs in their neighbourhoods, residents contributed ideas to the police on how best to prevent crime, including response to domestic violence.

After results had been achieved through the political space that the community had claimed through the ICIWF seminars, the local government opened up formal political space for the community, creating invited spaces. Women leaders in particular took advantage of the opportunity to participate in these municipal seminars (ICIWF 2007). Since this invited space had been preceded by a claimed space where citizens and officials developed relationships of respect and trust, and where the grassroots women developed skills, confidence, and voice as leaders, these meetings were quite fruitful (Bozhkova 2008a).

Community groups which were initially sceptical towards ideas of community co-operation with government bodies, or participation in political processes, took up opportunities for participatory democracy once they saw the results, such as

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playgrounds, beautified public spaces, and reduced crime. The community groups that developed out of these seminars now have their own office space, donated to them by the owners of the buildings. The space now serves as a hub for residents to voice their concerns, and to seek support from the women leaders to address them.

Conclusion

The work of UCOBAC, GROOTS Kenya, and ICIWF in carrying out Local to Local Dialogues all reflects the importance of organised groups of women having autonomous space, where they can progress from being less visible contributors to development and governance, to being recognised as community leaders, whose views are listened to and acted upon by the government. In all cases, women began organising with their neighbours as the first step towards relating to local government and demonstrating community-wide leadership. Women's leadership, from the first organising steps through the entire Local to Local Dialogues process, empowers them with the ability to influence local decisions and resource allocation, as well as contributing more generally to the deepening of democracy. This deepening is much needed in order to move beyond obstacles such as patronage in Uganda, or the limitations of strict hierarchies and resistance to collective action in Russia. The women demonstrate a new kind of leadership, that brings results by establishing ongoing relationships with the government, rather than posing as adversaries. The Local to Local Dialogue process also ensures that government bodies are accountable to citizens.

The Huairou Commission and GROOTS International can document, share, and promote the Local to Local Dialogues among grassroots women's organisations and institutional partners,[5] but this work is limited if institutional partners do not legitimate and support it. Currently, there is a challenge to women's organisations and to women's political participation in particular, as governments and development donors shift their focus away from supporting social movements and organising. The success of the groups that carried out Local to Local Dialogues indicates that if donors invest in the deepening of democracy, an essential part of that should be to support women to collectively organise. Bilateral and multilateral donors are using 'good governance' as a cornerstone policy in their work in developing countries, a policy that embodies many aspects of deepening democracy that are represented by the Local to Local Dialogues.[6] Development institutions should support grassroots women's groups not only to carry out local development work, but to organise and to challenge their marginalisation from politics and decision-making. A critical role that such institutions can play is to support women to build their capacities as leaders, and carry out processes such as the Local to Local Dialogue. These institutions also need to support national and transnational networking and sharing among grassroots women's groups. These processes, such as the multi-country pilots of Local to Local

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Dialogues supported by UNDP and UN Habitat, the documentation of the process, and the training that GROOTS Kenya carried out, played a critical role in beginning to scale up successful processes to deepen democracy.

Dahlia Goldenberg co-ordinates activities in the areas of peer exchange, global advocacy, and membership development at GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission. She is currently completing an MA in Gender and Development at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK. Postal address: 249 Manhattan Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11211, USA. E-mail: Dahliag@hotmail.com

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Notes

1 The Huairou Commission's work is largely driven by its Member Networks: Federacion de Mujeres Municipalistas – America Latina y el Caribe, GROOTS International, HIC-WAS, Red Mujer y Habitat – LAC, Information Center of the Independent Women's Forum, International Council of Women, Women in Cities International, and Women and Peace Network.

2 Esther Mwaura-Muiru is Director of GROOTS Kenya.

3 http://huairou.org/knowledge/News/2007/05-07-GC21.html (last checked August 2008).

4 ICIWF also works in Saint Petersburg, Velikiy Novgorod, Voronezh, Saratov, Tarus (Kaluzh region), Cheljabinsk, Snezhinsk (Cheljabinsk region), and Moscow.

5 The Huairou Commission and UN Habitat co-published Local to Local Dialogue: A Grassroots Women's Perspective on Good Governance, and they, together with GROOTS Kenya have produced a practical manual for grassroots leaders Engaging Local Community's and leaders in local governance: A Local-to-Local Dialogue Manual(forthcoming).

6 See the websites of DFID, GTZ, and the World Bank, for example (www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/governance.pdf, www.gtz.de/en/themen/857.htm, www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance, all sites last checked August 2008).

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